

Assessment Taskforce  
Final Report & 100 Day Action Plan  
November 23, 2009

**Executive Summary**

January, 2008: Original Assessment Taskforce, under the leadership of Elder Linda Hittle, leads Focused Living personal renewal retreats for 200 elders, staff and congregation. “Turning Points, pink and yellow stickies” are introduced to our vocabulary.

January, 2009: Assessment Taskforce with Elder Lee Bradley as chair, implemented a spiritually focused, strategic planning process facilitated by Dr. Terry Walling.

June: Terry Walling has separate meetings with the taskforce, Team Leaders, Bruce and Neal and finally with all of session. Clarifying the roles of staff and elders, surfaces as a significant issue.

September 11, 12: Thirty key leaders evaluate the people, circumstances and events in the life of the church that have changed the course of the church.

October 31: Journey wall mounted in the Art Gallery with photos submitted by members.

November 6, 7: Ninety members built on the work of the Guiding Coalition and confirmed several strengths in our church and obstacles that could hinder our progress.

November 10 to 22: More than 200 people participate online, in small groups and at two Wednesday night meeting answering the question, “did we get it right.”

November 23: Assessment Taskforce presents a final report and a 100 day action plan to session.

### **Summary of the 2009 Assessment Process**

In January, 2008 the original Assessment Taskforce, under the leadership of Elder Linda Hittle, led a process of personal renewal for elders, staff and congregation. Ultimately, almost 200 people participated in Focused Living retreats and were introduced to the principles of looking at the significant circumstances, events and people of our past to help determine God's direction for our future.

These same principles are at the core of the Assessment process. In January, 2009, the reformed Assessment Taskforce with Elder Lee Bradley as chair, implemented a spiritually focused strategic planning process and solicited the services of Dr. Terry Walling, the developer of both the Focused Living and Assessment processes, to facilitate a series of retreats that would take the congregation through a similar process that individuals had already experienced.

As summer approached, the taskforce planned, met with Terry and ultimately invited him to several meetings. He first met with the taskforce, then with Team Leaders, then with Bruce and Neal and finally with all of session. Out of those meetings came consensus on the need for clarity regarding the roles of staff and elders, a theme that would surface repeatedly during the rest of the process.

The taskforce did behind the scenes work of accumulating the history of the church, developing a list of names of 150 key leaders, and soliciting the submission of photos for an upcoming Journey Wall.

On September 11, 12, thirty key leaders deeply involved in all areas of the church, gathered as a Guiding Coalition. This group did the initial work of evaluating the people, circumstances and events in the life of the church that have changed the course of the church, in effect, becoming turning points in our history. These along with positive and negative moments became part of the Journey wall that was then mounted in the Art Gallery along with the photos submitted by members.

On November 6, 7, ninety members began with the work of the Guiding Coalition and from there confirmed several strengths in our church and obstacles that could hinder our progress if not addressed. Those results were gathered and a survey was developed to ask the congregation if we had correctly identified the strengths and issues.

From November 10 to 22 summaries and surveys were made available online, to small groups and at two Wednesday night meeting led by Pastor Neal and Lee Bradley. More than 200 surveys were completed. Out of all this input, discernment and confirmation, the Assessment Taskforce has produced a final report and a 100 day action plan to address its findings. On November 23 that report and action plan were presented to session.

**Assessing:** WHO we are, and WHAT could hold us back.

**Answering:** What are the few key issues that could keep RBCPC from being able to move forward?

Interviews with the Pastoral Staff and Session, along with the two workshops of the Assessment process yielded responses related to:

**Strengths** that RBCPC ought to build on in the future.

**Obstacles** that need to be addressed in order to move into the future.

**Patterns** to be continued or changed.

**Strengths to Build Upon:**

**1. Willing to step out in faith**

(New ministries, early launch of Preschool, Contemporary Worship, etc.)

**2. Positive “missional” outlook**

(History of Community Outreach which led to greater Global Outreach)

**3. Empowering Leadership Style**

(Holy-Spirit Infused) (Visionary, shift toward relational, lay leader empowerment, spirituality, etc.)

**4. Resiliency in face of tough times**

(Firestorm Recovery, the “Porch” issues, economy struggles, etc.)

**5. Diversity in Worship Styles**

(Contemporary Worship, Worship Café, Youth, Music/ Drama)

**6. Relational, Small Groups**

(Covenant groups, small groups, 7-day a week Church)

**7. Planning for Growth**

(facilities expansion, giving, resources, talented people, etc.)

### **Obstacles that could hold us back**

We derived these issues from taking an honest look at our past history and some of our significant events and turning points. Rather than disclosing, we want to acknowledge the strategic issues that (if not addressed) could impede our ability to move forward.

**1. Role of Elders needs to be better defined**

in relation to church staff; the decision making process at RBCPC.

**2. Vision clarity and finalization**

of issues related to the Porch. We need to move on.

**3. Communications**

inside within the church and its leaders, and communicating the church outside to the community.

**4. Better understanding of and taking action towards**

the post-modern world and culture, especially as it related to RBCPC relating to the current teens, 20's, 30's generations)

**5. Better engagement with the Community and its needs.**

The community is changing, and we need to be better connected.

**6. Avoid complacency**

do not allow ourselves to be too comfortable and focused on ourselves; the need for ongoing revival in the church

### **Patterns to be continued or changed**

**Continue:** Christ-centered, Biblically based leadership, preaching and teaching.

Throughout its history, RBCPC has been lead by conservative pastors and held to strong Biblical values.

**Change:** Moving on when problems arise without clarity or closure.

The history of RBCPC indicates that it often does not resolve issues that have hurt or brought confusion. Issues like unhealthy pastoral leadership in the 80's and staff conflict in the 90's are examples.

### **Connection with Vision Task Force**

It is clear that the VTF anticipated much of the findings of the ATF in its initial work more than a year ago. That 150 members of the congregation, from across ages, groups, and length of membership arrived at similar results reinforces the findings. It is clear that the leadership and congregation are heading in the same direction. It is also clear that the coming recommendations of the VTF and actions steps in the future are not different from the ATF but the ongoing working out of the jointly recognized opportunities.

### **In Conclusion**

Gratefully, the Assessment process revealed no "Smoking Guns," or dark secrets or overwhelming challenges. Instead, it surfaced deeply felt opinions and showed us things to be proud of and things to work on. The way forward is to live by the strengths and courageously address the challenges. A plan is attached which, in conjunction with the work of the Vision Taskforce, will overcome the obstacles and embrace the strengths.

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**The 100-Day Action Plan**

The first 100 days of any action is essential to the securing desired change. The first 100 days after any evaluation is when leaders are most apt to allocate effort required to translate insights into long term, new behavior. The 100-Day Plan is an intentional scripting to generate new momentum through short-term wins. Early wins can begin to tip-the-scale to long term change, if time, resources and focused efforts are allocated.

**RBCPC First 100-Days: November 18, 2009 – to – February 18, 2010**

**By November 28 (First 10 days):**  
SESSION approval of the 100 day plan.

**By December 18 (First 30 days):**  
Organize session taskforces and schedule to address issues.

**By January 18 (first 60 days):**

- 1. Change the pattern of moving on without clarity or closure by addressing the Porch.**
- 2. Vision clarity and finalization of issues related to the Porch.**

RBCPC could be in danger of repeating this pattern with the issue of The Porch. The prolonged uncertainty of what happened, and where from here, has brought frustration that some want to “quit hearing about The Porch.”

1. Convening of the key, strategic “participants” that were key to the decisions related to The Porch, the property acquisition, and the end-result meet for a final resolution discussion and closure (and even healing-reconciliation if needed) of any past issues.

2. An Invitation be given to ministry leaders and any interested in congregation for a “Town-Hall” style meeting to air a final explanation of what happened, why it happened, and the healing/resolution on the issues.

3. Final statement of resolution is communicated to the congregation as a whole, signaling the closure of the issue (once and for all), and the initiation of new, future direction.

4. Healthy closure leads to direction and clears the path for next steps to move beyond the Porch.

**By February 1 (first 75 days):**

Begin addressing the following Obstacles

1. **Role of Elders needs to be better defined** in relation to church staff; the decision making process at RBCPC.

Recommendation:

1. Bruce develop a position-paper on his vision for the roles-responsibilities of Pastoral Staff and Session within his desire for RBCPC to be a Staff-led Church. Select representatives of Pastoral Staff and Session meet with Bruce to review the position paper and give input. Session and Staff meet together to review the paper and discussion questions of both authority and responsibilities. Position on paper be adopted as amended. Staff and Session begin to function accordingly. Facilitation help for that discussion might prove helpful.
2. Development of the position paper into a part of new elder training.

**By February 18 (first 90 days):**

Begin addressing the following Obstacles

1. **Communications** inside within the church and its leaders, and communicating the church outside to the community.

Recommendation:

1. Develop a retreat for elders and team leaders to be trained in personal communication skills.
  2. Reevaluate role of Communication Taskforce to include surfacing the key issues and struggles related to RBCPC's poor communication, and together they make recommendation to the Session and Staff for changes and new approaches.
  3. New approaches should expand beyond session and staff to include deacons, small groups and other groups within the church.
2. **Better understanding of the post-modern world and culture**, especially as it related to RBCPC relating to the current teens, 20's, 30's generations).
  3. **Better engagement with the Community and its needs.** The community is changing, and we need to be better connected.

Recommendation: Two Task forces be created (or assigned) at the end of the first 100-days to study both recommendations and be ready to reports back to Staff and Session.

**Communication of the 100-Day Action Steps**

It is vital that communication be made to those who participated in the GUIDING COALITION Retreat and LARGE GROUP BREAKTRU SUMMIT meetings of the plan and action being taking by the Session and Staff regarding these recommendations.

Failure to act and/or communicate the actions being taken as result of your investment to ASSESS the critical issues that could hold RBCPC back, could have a serious impact in moving forward.